

To: All OHSAA Head Baseball Coaches
From: Jerry Snodgrass, Assistant Commissioner
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With the “no-contact period” approaching, this is an end of the summer memo to all baseball coaches to remind everyone of a few important regulations.

Need Answers to Questions?

Seldom do we say this, however, the start of fall practices – transfers, new coaches, as well as the administration of other sports, makes it very difficult to keep up with phone calls and emails for out of season coaches. Though, just like you, we do work incredible hours over the next few months, if you need questions answered, please check out the documents on “This Week in Baseball” at: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/bb/boys/2015/TWIB2015.htm> and check with your Athletic Director first. Thanks in advance for being patient during this period of time.

No-Contact Period

Please remember the No-Contact Period begins August 1 and now runs through the month of August. No baseball related contact with players is permitted during this time. Supervision of the weight room IS permitted during the No-Contact Period. The No-Contact Period is detailed at: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/bb/boys/TWIBNoContactRule.pdf>

Fall Baseball

Fall isn't just for football anymore....Fall baseball, fall softball and fall basketball leagues are increasing in number every year. With the increase in these, this is just a reminder that General Sports Regulation 7.3.1 still restricts the number of players that played for the same school teams the previous season to FOUR on the same NON-school team outside the season (except during June and July). So, IF your players are playing in a fall league, just insure there are not more than 4 that played for any of your school teams the previous season on the same fall team. Please do not confuse this rule with the “4 Player Individual Instruction Regulation” (see below) as they are completely separate regulations. Advice, clarifications and common Q and A's on “Fall Ball” are posted at: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/bb/boys/TWIBAdviceForFallBall.pdf>

And, I am often asked if there is a regulation that prohibits a football player from playing fall baseball. There is not. The ‘non-interscholastic rule’ only affects individuals from participating in the SAME non-school sport during the same season (a baseball player cannot participate in non-school BASEBALL during the baseball season, etc.). It might drive a football coach crazy and your school may have a policy against it but the OHSAA does not.

Pitch Count Rule

First, I encourage EVERYONE to read: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/bb/boys/2015/NFHSRulesProcess.pdf>
It explains the PROCESS of how rules are created on a national level. The recently adopted rule that will require Ohio and all states to adopt a ‘pitch count’ is just that – a NATIONAL rule and of course, since the OHSAA Constitution requires us to follow all NFHS Rules, we will implement one as well. Don't think for one minute that I am going to sit behind a desk and come up with a number that will be required. I will be taking input from many knowledgeable individuals. Short of saying the word ‘committee’, I plan on taking this input and providing it to the OHSBCA – the Coaches’ Association that works for you and represents you. From that, we will devise a number that will also take into consideration required rest between pitch outings, etc. Though everyone (especially media) WANTS to know, there is no NEED to know until late December when Rules Meetings are put together, the OHSBCA Clinic is around the corner, etc. And we will have one by then.

Individual Instruction

We are entering the 4th year for the Individual Instruction Regulation. Knowing most baseball coaches do not utilize this until January, there are still some things to take note of. Though there are some fairly strict parameters, this is a reminder that the purpose of this was to provide coaches the opportunity to provide individual SKILL instruction –

NOT team workouts. There is nothing in the regulation that would permit coaches to coach fall teams – this is a misconception not permitted by the regulation. I would encourage you to read, print and disseminate the updated explanation of this regulation located at:

<http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/bb/boys/2014/TWIB14/BaseballIndividualInstruction.pdf>

Are YOU a Private Instructor or Own Your Own Facility?

This question comes up more and more – “if I own my own facility or I am a private instructor, am I able to instruct players from my own school’s teams during the no-contact period”? The answer to that is still ‘no’. There has been no exception granted for those individuals who own their own facilities or are employed as private instructors. Currently, only individual sport coaches (tennis, golf, swimming, etc.) are afforded this exception.

A Clarification on Out-of-Season Instruction

Individuals that have never played for a school team are not ‘governed’ by any OHSAA regulations. In other words, if you have the next rising baseball star in your school who is a freshman and you do not have Junior High baseball at your school, that rising star is not governed by any OHSAA baseball regulations until he participates in his first game or scrimmage for your school. So, what does this mean? It means he does not count as one of the 4 individuals (50% limitation) on a ‘Fall Ball’ team. He also could receive instruction from any school coach without restriction. But keep in mind, if he WOULD still count as one of the 4 individuals permitted in Individual instruction if *any* of the other 3 were previous players for your school.

Open Field/Open Gym

It has been my intent to remove any and all misunderstandings as well as address all scenarios permitted within various other sports regulations – most notably those addressing “Open Gyms/Fields”, “Conditioning & Weight Programs”. Basically, in an “open field”....it can be **unstructured** play. No instruction, no hitting ground balls, no rotating into the batting cages, etc. You may ask “what CAN you do”? Basically, players can choose sides and..... *play baseball*. But keep in mind, that is why the individual instruction regulation was put in place – to PERMIT you to do some coaching/instruction outside the season. “Open Fields/Gyms” and “Individual Instruction” are 2 entirely separate regulations and I strongly encourage you to understand both. Detailed off-season baseball Q and A’s are addressed in a document on the “This Week in Baseball” page directly at:

<http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/bb/boys/TWIBOffseasonBaseballQuestions.pdf>

“Showcases”

Another overnight sensation – “Showcases”. Intended to feature the ‘elite’ players, Ohio stands to have the best tournament ever based upon the number of “Showcases” that have developed. Simply keep in mind that “Showcases” are no different than any other “Travel”, Classic” or whatever other name they may go by in the off-season. There is a limit of 4 players on these teams that played for the same school teams the previous seasons if these “Showcases” involve team play. If they are hitting, throwing, etc., they are permitted to do these outside the season. Just as indicated above with “Fall Leagues” and the same General Sports Regulation (7.3.1) applies.

2017 Schedule Notes & An Important Reminder

No doubt, where spring break falls and the start of the season for games causes some difficulty for schools making out of state trips (especially south). Our Coaches’ Memo in late June reminded all coaches of an important change for 2017 that WILL permit you to scrimmage in non-bordering states. Yes...you are reading that correctly. But, a very important reminder:

1. Regular Season Games may begin on March 25, 2017, not before
2. Any scrimmage MUST be a scrimmage for both schools (not a game for one and a scrimmage for the other)
3. Any game must be a game for both schools (not a scrimmage for one and a game for the other)
4. Any travel to a non-bordering state cannot result in missing school time for travel OR competition
5. Schools are permitted to travel to non-bordering states ONE time per season provided they meet the above requirements of the bylaw.